

PURPOSE, POLICY AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Chairman: Reginald S. Lourie

THE ROLE OF THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST IN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Talcott Parsons

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

This is not a research paper, but an attempt, from the perspective of considerable experience as a social scientist, to say a few sensible things about an important policy problem of the profession. The best starting point is perhaps the consideration that behavioral scientists are intellectuals and, in the present world, intellectuals are more prone than other groups to manifest a broad and diffuse concern for the state of the world. Though there are many points at which this state is distressing, especially to intellectuals, the danger of nuclear war for understandable reasons tends to loom over all others.

There is an important conflict between this concern for the practical world and the ethos of science. This concerns not only the danger to objectivity inherent in too intensive concern for practical outcomes and hence of predominance of either wish fulfillment or anxiety fulfillment. Equally important is the attainment of high levels of analytical generalization, which tends to be impeded by too intensive concentration on problems at particular empirical levels. Science as a cumulatively developing body of generalized knowledge is the goose that lays an indefinite number of golden eggs for the long future. The faction which insists that its first duty is to solve immediately urgent human problems and that scientists who refuse to make this their first duty are irresponsible, is, in effect, advocating killing the goose.

This, however, is by no means the whole story. Science always has and should articulate with the world of practical decision making, and the history of medicine shows as one of the most important cases. The call is not for either/or, but for a balance. A minority of social scientists should make the study of international problems their specialty, but primarily as scientists, rather than as advisors to the practical decision makers. This is indeed a rapidly growing minority. The field has in the past tended to be pre-empted by one branch of political science and a very small minority of economists concerned primarily with international trade. Today there has been a veritable stampede of economists, sociologists and anthropologists, and even a few psychologists and psychiatrists, into this field, especially under the heading of "development." This is a symptom of the times, which has its positive aspects, but also its dangers.

Another minority should be engaged in applied behavioral science in the international field, namely, the direct attempt to reach conclusions that can be

expected to be of immediate practical use. That this should be a minority seems to me to follow from the premise that our state of fundamental knowledge is still primitive, and that a really major contribution at this level must await developments at the basic levels.

In the latter part of the paper an attempt will be made to indicate a few major problem areas that involve both strategic importance and feasibility for attack. In particular I would like to stress the problem of order in the international field as an extension of what we know about its conditions within social systems that already possess a relatively stable political organization.

THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENTISTS AND WORLD WAR IV

Elton B. McNeil

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

There is danger that, unless behavioral scientists alter their approach to the problems of war and peace, they may too late bring too little to the solution of world-wide conflict.

The times have never been more ripe for a concerted effort by behavioral scientists to make an historically significant change in human affairs. Since mid-1961 we have seen the greatest mass proliferation of peace activities since the 1930s. But these new peace workers are poorly organized and tend to direct their anguish to the crises of the moment, with little consideration of any specific program for attaining peace beyond this year, and there is little reason to believe that its vigor will continue to exist in times of reduced international tensions. In America the peace movement is without the vital or determined leadership of important political persons, and behavioral scientists have provided discouragingly little practical leadership to this movement.

Decisions about arms control, disarmament, war and peace are, and have been for the last ten years, dictated by a military-technological-scientific combine that feels it knows all it needs to know about human nature. It should be noted that international relations have yet to evolve in a peaceful direction when left exclusively to the present decision makers. I am convinced that we will never master an adequate contribution to the prevention of World War III, unless behavioral scientists revise the breadth and nature of their approach to the crucial issues of these times.

We need urgently a new breed of behavioral scientist—one less tied to his discipline and dependent on its view of man's hostile international relations, one whose intellectual grasp is great enough to encompass knowledge and method across the range of political science, economics, history, psychology, social work. A new breed of Generalists in Human Affairs is desperately needed and we continue daily to pay the price of their absence on the stage of world affairs. Ideally, I think we should begin at once to make room in our educational institutions for the training of this new breed of behavioral scien-

tist. The urgency of world affairs dictates that specialists in the behavioral sciences ought also to begin now to re-tread themselves to form the prototype of this new breed.

The plan, simply, is for every interested behavioral scientist to begin at once using the ultimate weapon—his brain. To read, study, discuss, write, think and act to solve the problem of international human relations. My feeling is that the vital test of the worth of the behavioral sciences will be found in their ability to help society meet this final crisis—its race against extinction.

An initial handicap to be overcome is the matter of the visibility of the products of behavioral science in action. The behavioral scientists can offer nothing so easy to perceive and understand in an instant as the firing of a capsule into orbit by the physical scientists.

An even greater task confronting the behavioral scientists is to convince our decision makers of the need to use our methods and theory in asking some very fundamental questions before crises reach a critical stage. Decision makers clearly need assistance in examining, with less haste, such questions as, "Why are things as they are in the world?" "How could they be different?" "How can we change them?"

Finally, of all the challenges the behavioral scientist must face, undoubtedly the most difficult is that of changing the perception of the decision makers about the nature of the real problem that must be solved. We are disadvantaged by the fact that, since the United States lost its atomic monopoly, the race between Eastern and Western cultures has been defined in terms of missile hardware, warheads, nuclear delivery capacity and military force. The notion that world dangers can be traced to human reactions among world leaders is never completely abandoned but it is never really given much credence. In the scramble to stay abreast of the forward thrust of technology, the fundamental problem of the psychological nature of the human beings whose lives are at stake in this race has hardly been considered.

i-TRUST

Bernhardt Lieberman

State University of New York, Stony Brook, New York

The paper deals with the notion of trust and its relevance to the conduct of international affairs. The various views are dichotomized. Some believe that the notion is irrelevant and serious consideration of it in the conduct of affairs between nations is dangerous. It is said that nations will act out of self-interest, abrogating treaties and agreements whenever it appears desirable to do so. Those who concern themselves with such a notion as trust are irresponsible, difficult to deal with, unpredictable and, hence, dangerous. Others argue that the fact that nations do not trust each other lies at the root of the difficulties in international relations. Wars and international conflicts, it is said, arise not from irreconcilable conflicts of interests but from confusions, mistrust and fear. With-

out relations characterized by trust, nations are likely to become involved in mutually destructive conflicts.

A notion of trust (*i-Trust*) based on self-interest is discussed. The conception arose from an experiment in which subjects played a three-person, zero-sum, majority game. The mathematical theory of games of strategy yields precise prescriptions of rational behavior only in a limited number of two-person situations. In most three-person situations, the theory fails to dictate with sufficient precision what an individual should do. The situation studied was complex: Several different coalitions or alliances were possible; bargaining, agreements, deception and desertions occurred. Since the mathematical theory gives no obvious way for the subjects to resolve the conflict situation, some behavioral criteria were necessary for the resolution of the conflicts involved. After much bargaining and the making and breaking of agreements, the subjects formed stable alliances with those they thought they could "trust."

The results of the experiment are presented and the nature of this particular notion of trust is considered in relation to the particular experiment done, and its relationship to international affairs is considered.

TEACHING AS A WEAPON FOR PEACE

Joseph de Rivera

Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

We are interested in preventing a third world war. To accomplish this, many techniques are being used, ranging from peace marching through pure research. One effective technique is not in much use, however, in spite of the fact that we are experts in its use, namely, teaching.

Teaching the psychology of international relations may be done in an informal conversation or in a formal course. In conversations the Socratic dialogue and the Rapaport debate method are useful tools; in the classroom, demonstrations are effective. The paper discusses three of the many ideas that should be taught and examples of different methods of teaching them.

1. Consider the assertion, "The Russians put missiles in Cuba in order to control us on the Berlin issue." The person making this statement needs to be taught the idea that "Russians" are not a monolithic monster making rational decisions.

In a classroom you might lecture on studies of decision making that have shown decisions to be "arational" compromises between different forces. In a private conversation with a student, you might use a Socratic dialogue to answer his assertion. Thus, "That sounds like a probable motive; have you ever controlled a person like that?" He, "Well, yes, once I baby-sat for a real brat. I was supposed to put him to bed at eight so I told him I wouldn't read him a story if he wouldn't go to bed—but I *had* to do something." You, "You mean you think that because of his responsibilities, Khrushchev had to get us to do what he wanted?" He, "Well, yes, that's so."

2. Consider the headline, "Reds forced to co-operate on space program."

The person who wrote this needs to ask himself what the Russians could do, short of becoming Americans, that would convince him that there are "positive" forces within the Russian government.

In the classroom you would want to use Holsti's data showing that whenever the Russians did something "nice," Dulles thought of them as being *weak* rather than *good*. In a conversation with a friend you might use the Rapaport debate method, thus, "You believe that the Russians are co-operating with us because of economic problems. Certainly, if they had economic problems, they might want to co-operate; but do you understand how I feel?" He, "You think that there may have been genuine co-operative forces at work also?" You, "Yes, and what bothers me is that I can think of nothing these forces could do that would not be interpreted as being sinister or weak." He, "Well, I will have to worry over that."

3. Consider the idea that we should not do anything nice for the Russians because they would think it an act of weakness and would take advantage of us (a projection of the above attitude). This idea must be met with evidence that it is possible to be firm and strong while one is being friendly.

In a conversation, you might point out how some parents can be both kind and firm with their children. The paper describes a classroom demonstration which illustrates the idea of giving while remaining firm.

There is a large amount of material that needs to be taught in psychology classes and in conversations. Mimeographed summaries of some of this material are available. Could you use them?

Discussant: J. Spiro

FILM SHOWINGS

Chairman: Edward A. Mason

(These films on survival were made available through the co-operation of The Office of The Surgeon General.)

THE MEDICAL EFFECTS OF THE ATOMIC BOMB:

Part 1: Physics, Physical Destruction, Casualty Effects

MANAGEMENT OF MASS CASUALTIES

Part 10: Management of Psychological Casualties

ATOMIC MEDICAL CASES: JAPAN, WORLD WAR II